

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1207

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USMISSION OECD PJRIS

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UNCLAS KUWAIT 4424

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: EAID KU

SUBJ: RESOURCES FOR POPULATION ASSISTANCE: KUWAIT

REF: STATE 222901

1. CHARGE AND EMBOFF SPOKE RESPECTIVELY WITH MINISTRY FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND KUWAIT FUND FOR ARAB ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (KFAED) OFFICIALS ABOUT URGENT NEED FOR WEALTHY NATIONS TO INCREASE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE IN CONNECTION WITH POPULATION PROGRAMS. WE LEARNED THAT GOK CONTRIBUTED \$20,000 TO UNFPA LAST YEAR AND IT POSSIBLE SOMEWHAT MORE MAY BE GIVEN THIS YEAR. AS OF NOW, HOWEVER, NO SIZEABLE INCREASE IN KUWAITI FUNDS FOR POPULATION PROGRAMS SEEMS LIKELY.

2. RE UNFPA, MFA MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS RE KUWAITI CONTRIBUTIONS WITH CONCURRENCE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND OIL TO COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WHICH MUST APPROVE CONTRIBUTION. THUS, THOUGH SOME OFFICIALS WITHIN MFA BELIEVE GOK SHOULD INCREASE ITS CONTRIBUTION TO UNFPA, MATTER IS SUBJECT TO HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL REVIEW. AT THIS LEVEL THERE HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN RESISTANCE AMONG

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KUWAITIS TO SUPPORT POPULATION CONTROL PROGRAMS VIGOROUSLY

PARTLY BECAUSE IT IS CONSIDERED TO BE A SENSITIVE LOCAL ISSUE
AND PARTLY BECAUSE OF RELIGIOUS REASONS.

3. SIMILARLY KFAED IS HESITANT TO MAKE LOANS FOR POPULATION
PROGRAMS. UNLESS HOST COUNTRY OFFICIALLY WELCOMES SUCH ASSISTANCE
AND HAS AN ON-GOING PROGRAM OF POPULATION CONTROL KFAED IS
UNLIKELY TO WISH TO TAKE INITIATIVE. TO DATE ITS EXPERIENCE
HAS BEEN WITH ARAB COUNTRIES ALMOST ALL OF WHICH LACK SUCH
PROGRAMS. ON OTHER HAND KFAED MIGHT BE WILLING COORDINATE ITS
ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS WITH OTHERS IN SUCH A WAY TO RELEASE OTHER
FUNDS FOR POPULATION PROGRAMS. FOR EXAMPLE, KFAED MAY AGREE
TO FINANCE A GIVEN PROJECT, AND FUNDS OTHERWISE EARMARKED FOR
THAT PROJECT COULD, INSTEAD, BE USED FOR POPULATION PROGRAMS.

4. COMMENT: IN GENERAL KUWAITIS NOT EAGER TO BECOME INVOLVED
DIRECTLY IN POPULATION PROGRAMS. NOT ONLY ARE THEY SENSITIVE
TO RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS. KFAED GROUP, AT LEAST,
BELIEVES FAMILY SIZE TENDS TO BE REDUCED AS DEVELOPMENT INCREASES.
THUS, KFAED WOULD EMPHASIZE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BELIEVING
LOWER BIRTH RATES WILL FOLLOW. NONETHELESS, KUWAITIS NOT COM-
PLETELY CLOSE MINDED. WE BELIEVE THEY MOST LIKELY TO RESPOND
TO SPECIFIC PROGRAMS WHERE HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALLY WELCOMES
SUCH AID AND IS OFFICIALLY COMMITTED TO POPULATION CONTROL
PROGRAMS. IN PARTICULAR, WE BELIEVE, IN CERTAIN INSTANCES
AT LEAST, KFAED FUNDS COULD BE AVAILABLE IN ANCILLARY ROLE,
EVEN IF THEY WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE DIRECTLY.
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